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EPISCOPALIANS ASSIST UGANDANS, OTHERS IN NEED

NEW YORK -- A pediatrician from Uganda stopped by the Episcopal Church Center in early August to express the gratitude of the Anglican Church of that country for recent shipments of drugs to help in the rehabilitation efforts in that war-torn country.

Dr. Engola Omodi, who is a consultant for medical services for both the Ugandan government and the Church, reported to the World Mission in Church and Society staff that the most recent shipment of 87 cartons of drugs had arrived safely and was being used to treat a host of curable diseases.

Dr. Omodi lived in exile in the United States from 1971 to 1979 and worked on the staff of the Downstate Medical Center in Kings County, New York. He fled Uganda following the ascent of President Idi Amin to power and was able to return to his native country when the dictator was finally overthrown. Before his exile he had been a surgeon in a government hospital.


Dr. Omodi said that the greatest medical needs in Uganda were for drugs to treat certain curable diseases, such as malaria, and antibiotics. He said that the hospitals in his country are not able to function because of disrepair and lack of equipment.

"United States church agencies have done far more to help us than the U.S. government," he continued.

Of special concern to him is the fact that polio, once almost eradicated from the country, has returned under the regime of President Amin, when medical services were limited.

The pediatrician said the health problems of Ugandans are compounded by a severe drought in the Karamoja area in the northeast section of the country. Karamoja lies within a drought-ridden strip of territory stretching from the beaches of the Red Sea to the hills of Zimbabwe along the east coast of Africa. Thousands have already died from malnutrition and other hunger-related diseases in the area.

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In late July, the Episcopal Church's Presiding Bishop's Fund for World Relief made an emergency grant of \$30,000 to the Church of Uganda for the Karamoja famine relief. The grant was made possible by a designated gift of \$50,000 from the Venture in Mission program of the Diocese of Southwest Florida for the alleviation of world hunger.

The Presiding Bishop's Fund designated \$30,000 for the Ugandan crisis and the remaining \$20,000 for a food distribution program in Cambodia. The Diocese of Southwest Florida last fall increased their original Venture in Mission goal of \$2.5 million by \$1 million to "give our first fruits to the hungry people of the world."

In a letter to the World Mission Office at the Episcopal Church Center this summer, Bishop Festo Kivengere of the Ugandan Diocese of Kigezi described the situation in Karamoja as "still very serious." He said the people in his diocese have been sending dried peas and beans and other food stuffs "but it was just a drop in the bucket. We need more help immediately."

The Presiding Bishop's Fund made three other emergency grants in late July: \$2,000 to the Diocese of Southwest Florida for Haitians in Immokalee; \$3,000 to Church World Service for relief following an earthquake in the Grecian province of Thessaly; and \$1,000 to Church World Service for the research and work of the Latin American and Caribbean Refugee Education Project.

The grant to the Diocese of Southwest Florida will enable Bishop E. Paul Haynes and his diocesan leaders to resettle in nearby congregations some 40 to 50 Haitian refugee families who are now in the Immokalee, Fla., area.

The grant of \$3,000 for Church World Service relief in Greece is to assist in building four barracks to house the homeless in the area of the town of Larissa, which seems to have suffered the most extensive damage as a result of an earthquake. About 80 percent of the houses in the area were destroyed, leaving up to 8,000 persons homeless.

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